TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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No. 95
February, 1954

The Theology of Arthur E. Holt

THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP

BOOK LIBRARY PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

• Arthur E. Holt was reared on a farm. He became an ordained Congregational minister. At an early period he was pastor of the Congregational Church at Pueblo, Colorado, where he got education in the problems of labor during a prolonged strike of the local coal miners in a depression period. He later was minister of the Congregational Church at Manhattan, Kansas, where the State College of Agriculture is located. This institution made him aware of farm problems.

Applied Christianity

Arthur Holt became professor of applied Christianity at Chicago Theological Seminary. His courses were concerned with both the industrial worker and the farmer.

During this period he participated in three outstanding events:

The first was his participation in the Chicago milk shed problems. The farmers were paid little for their milk, the truck drivers were maneuvering for position and wages, and the wholesale milk companies of the city were fighting both. Dr. Holt made a study of the milk shed situation which led to his becoming an arbitrator of milk disputes over a long period.

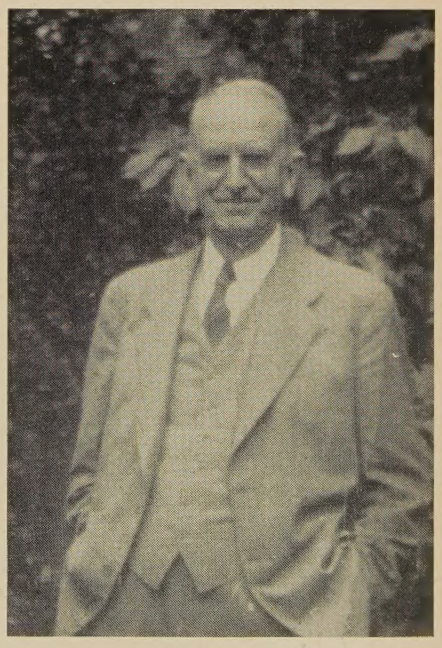
The second event was the founding of the Congregational Council for Social Action. The nature and significance of that organization is well-known.

The final movement was the founding and continued support of Merom Rural Life Institute at Merom, Indiana. Merom was a pioneering venture, a new type of rural social institution, to which the brilliant theological school professor devoted much of his time and some of his money. He was president of the board and unofficial fund raiser for Merom Rural Life Institute from about 1934 until his death in 1941.

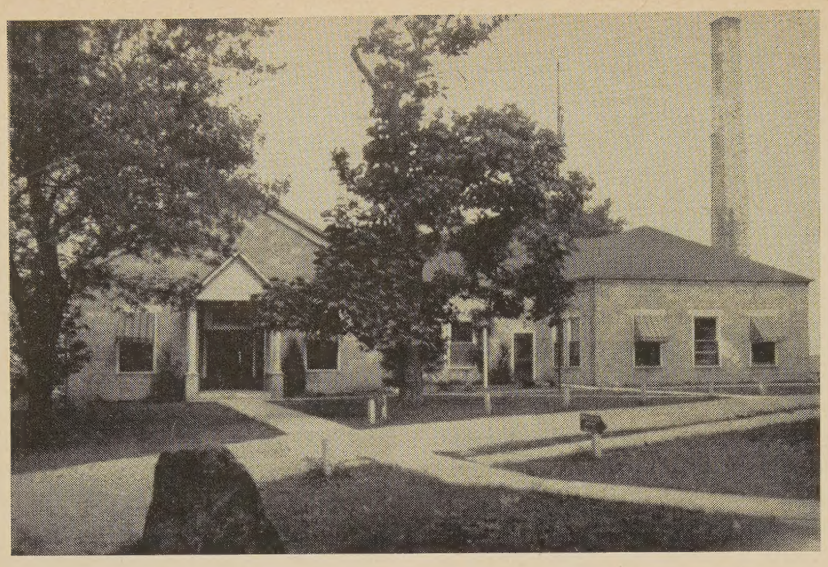
Professor Holt was born in the midst of the greatest agrarian crusade in history. This crusade included the farm revolts which raged throughout the 1870's, 1880's, and 1890's with varying degrees of intensity, particularly in the Middle West. For over a third of a century the Granger Movement, Greenbackers, Populism, William Jennings Bryan and "Sixteen-to-One" money policy were successively the political watchwords of embattled farmers. Present-day liberalism, Christian social action and welfare government have owed much to these agrarian movements. Arthur E. Holt derived many of his theories from these same sources. The fact that he was the "Father of Social Action" for the Congregationalists and the circumstances of his rural roots are of one piece.

A Rural Prophet

First and foremost, Dr. Holt was a rural prophet. Curiously, he never wrote a full-sized book specifically on rural life. The list of seven volumes which he produced is notable for this omission in view of his strong rural interests. But in scores of articles and



Arthur E. Holt



Holt Hall
Merom Institute, Merom, Ind.

in hundreds of speeches—and in some of the books, for that matter—agrarian theories were always basic.

Holt was a servant of many causes, but the rural movement was closest to his heart. His own agrarian background and down-to-earth philosophy made this interest a natural one. As a sociologist, he was moved by the cultural depletion of rural communities. As a churchman, he was appalled by the inadequacy of irrelevant, divisive and competitive rural religion. As a man, he felt the urgent demands of the human and economic problems of farm and village families. As a pastor, he was always interested in the farmers of his parishes.

Research

He was devoted to research for the sake of the rural church. During the Interchurch World Movement he was a member of the committee on rural surveys which was a forerunner of what later became the Institute of Social and Religious Research which, in turn, was the forerunner of present-day field research in the National Council of Churches. In his teaching at Chicago Theological Seminary he did much to set the tone of socially pertinent religious leadership throughout the Middle West. His oft-repeated course on the rural-urban conflict was one of his chief interests and, in his own opinion, the key to most of his other activities.

Merom Rural Life Institute

At the last, Merom Rural Life Institute had become a symbol of Dr. Holt's vision of rural welfare and a background for his agrarian social philosophy. He believed that rural people must be encouraged to solve their own problems. Merom was conceived by him as an instrument to help them to do just that. He dreamed and worked for the day when a number of similar institutions should be established across America to serve as centers of thought and action for, by and of rural people on behalf of their own welfare.

Arthur E. Holt believed in the power for good of the American rural town. "Let power return to the village," he often said. His view was tied up with his belief in the worth of the indigenous processes of the rural neighborhood. This conviction was, in part, basic to his interest in Merom Rural Life Institute. To him the small town of Merom, Indiana, and her people were more important than the national "experts" and academic leaders who helped direct this work. Merom community was to him a good place to live and have a home. In fact, he planned to identify himself with it and would have settled there after his retirement had he lived a little longer. The American small town, the place where one basic section of humanity resides, was one of his greatest hopes for the future of the nation and the world.

Justice for All

Justice for the farmer was another chief element in Dr. Holt's agrarianism. The social movements in which he participated were designed to seek justice for all, and the farmer was not forgotten in his plans. American labor and the "lower third" in the slums of the city had long excited the emotions of radical and liberal social leadership, but Holt remembered the farmers, too.

He maintained that "the farmer's right to market his goods shall parallel the laborer's right to dispose of labor, a true self-determination being accorded to both; that the cost of market distribution shall be cut to the lowest possible terms; that there shall be every possible encouragement to the organization of farmers for economic ends; and that there shall be widespread development of organized rural communities."

Redemption of Rural Life

Dr. Holt believed in rural religion but was not satisfied with the expressions sometimes given to it in traditional country and village churches. He never lost faith in the rural church, but he knew that it must be revitalized. "It is becoming increasingly evident that the salvation of rural America does not lie in improving church methods. There is no citizen of the United States who is so likely to maintain a church as the farmer if he has income enough to support one. Of course, no human being with limited means ought to be asked to support our present expensive Protestant ecclesiastical economy; but, change this system as we will, we offer little relief to a man with an income which leaves him only a few dollars to spend on cultural development. . . . The Protestant ministry is too expensive for most rural communities."

Dr. Holt believed in rural religion and said, emphatically more than once, that it had a place in any pro-

ram for agrarian progress. He only new that the competitive rural hurch was inadequate in its present orm. Merom, again, was an example f his efforts at the improvement of he rural church through the train- ng of leaders and the strengthening f rural communities.

he Theology of Arthur E. Holt

I. The following quotations, indi- ating the theology of Dr. Holt, are aken from his book, *This Nation Under God*:

"When people cease to live in amilies and villages they will find it ncreasingly hard to have a picture f God as a father and of other hu- nan beings as brothers."

"With reference to all social or- lers, however, the Christian must onsistently maintain that they exist ot as ends in themselves but for God, whose ultimate purpose of love nust be the end of all society. . . . Christianity cannot praise irrespon- ible democracy nor totalitarian or- lers which deny man the chance to e free. It rests on a firmer basis. It rings its own order of values and ndependently must criticize both."

"Jesus confidently expected that is new community, characterized by ocial faith, justice and brotherliness, would supplant the old community based on autocratic compulsion, fear nd heredity. He was not an idle dreamer. He was the keenest of social hinkers. He saw that communities ounded on force and fear always de- elop within themselves the antip- thies which cause them to disinte- grate. He saw how small communi- ies, like that of the home which enters around a good father, grow trong and persist through all the icissitudes of history. Could he not build a world community in which men would partake of the spirit of heir heavenly Father? Such a com- munity would indeed be founded upon rock, and all the floods and storms of time could not prevail against it. Because he believed in God he had utter confidence that God had called him to found such a community. In parable and story he set forth his optimistic convic- tions.

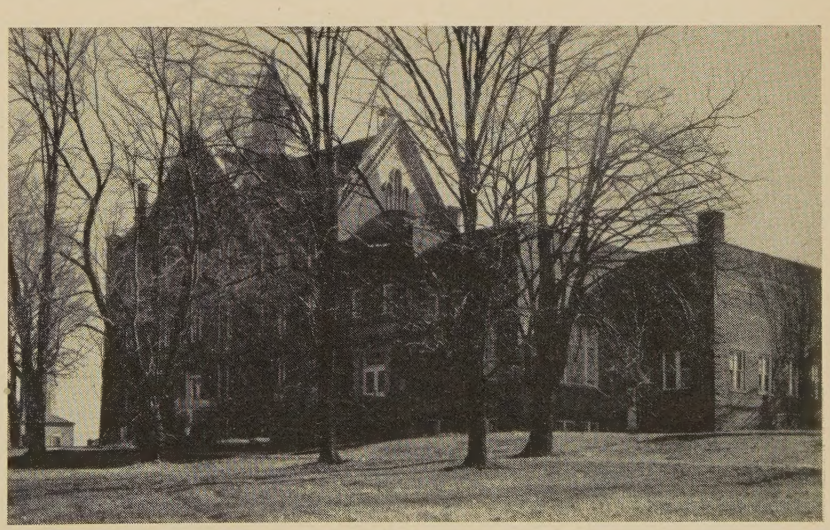
"Jesus anticipated the ultimate triumph of his community because he saw that the old order was im- possible. It could never develop any- thing but human hate and human hate is the negation of community life. His order alone was possible. It gave promise of joy, happiness, com- radeship, a community of the spirit where there would be youth and freshness and growth, a brotherhood which men could never outgrow and which would be the crowning glory of the creative work of God the Father. But he never minimized to himself the cost of the new commu- nity. Continually he warned men against the fallacy of hoping to se- cure it at bargain rates. The price was high—self-control and moral maturity won by severe discipline of body and mind."

II. The following quotations indi- cate the efforts of Dr. Holt as de- veloped in another book, *The Bible as a Community Book:*

"Too often we are accustomed to think of the prophets as great indi- viduals who dealt directly with He- brew life without considering the way in which the prophets influenced each other and all contributed to the outlines of a coming better social order which was to be the commu- nity of God. Each makes his contri- bution to a common line of thought which becomes the property of all. Gradually the criticism of the old social order advances in the minds of the prophets to the positive out- lining of a new and better one.

"Reconstruction in its final phase was largely influenced by the con- structive genius of Ezekiel. With an almost painful regard for detail, Ezekiel with measuring rod outlines the dimensions of the better com- munity, locating even the residence of priests and king and the dwelling of Jehovah. The striking point about his plan for the new community is that it is to be a God-governed com- munity and the place of pre-emi- nence is given to the temple instead of the palace of the king. In other words, we have here a distinct asser- tion on the part of the prophets of an ethical spiritual community in which the rule is the rule of God and his righteousness, and in which the king has only a subordinate place. They have achieved a moral and spiritual and social triumph in thus conceiving and outlining an in- ternational community based on the righteousness of God where ethical qualifications constitute the basis of membership."

"It is impossible to understand the thought of Jesus concerning commu- nity life without understanding the Roman Empire which was the great world community of his day. World orders have a way of dictating terms to the smaller communities of the world. It is hard to fight against a



"Old College Hall"
Merom Institute, Merom, Ind.

world order. Those who succeed are the creative persons of history. Had Germany triumphed and succeeded in imposing her imperialistic scheme on the world, we should have had something comparable to the world order which Jesus knew. The result of such a triumph would have been a triumph for an ideal of life as well as a political system, and this ideal would have penetrated and have influenced the remotest community of the world, just because it had become the dominant community ideal in the world."

"Jesus has been proclaimed as the chief revolt leader of all history. He has been pictured as the leader of the proletariat who sought to organize the seething forces of unrest in the Roman Empire. Jesus taught a profound doctrine of self-respect but he was interested in something more than the starting of a revolt. A civilization which can stand alone is more than a reaction. The verdict of Jewish history was all against such a plan. Jesus looked forward to a society in which men loved justice more than do those who are willing just to rebel against injustice in others. He looked for a society characterized by moral and spiritual independence gained through discipline more severe than that of Scribe and Pharisee where men through self-criticism had learned the art of being just and giving justice to others."

"The builders of the new order will seek as their main concern in life the righteousness of God, confident that the other privileges and necessities of life can be secured by a social order which has paid the price of a right attitude between man and man. A world now facing starvation because of the disruption, through war, of the forces of production and the channels of trade may well heed Jesus' thought that the maintaining of right relationships among men is the key to the solution of the problem of food and drink."

"The Protestant Church was the outgrowth of the rising tide of self-assertion on the part of the political, industrial and religious groups of central Europe which finally revolted against the authority of the Catholic Church. It has often been described as the assertion of the right of individual liberty in religion. As a principle of protest against a manipulating autocratic power, this right of individual liberty in religion is legitimate. . . . There is no well established center in modern Protestantism which gives opportunity for the exercise of that modern mania for controlling centers of influence. Again, modern religious life has been fairly progressive. Individual churches may be slow to suggestion and conservative, but society gives to the new the right to organize freely and openly. And again, religion has been fairly democratic. The church which must live by the good will of the people must live close to the people."

"In the building of the Christian conscience the spirit and principle of righteousness must be more important than the letter. If the Church is not to reduce people to moral childishness, it must have that regard for the moral integrity of the individual which will cause it not to seek the authority which destroys, but to offer that authority of the spirit which also encourages freedom. The Church must never again become the teacher of a casuistry which destroys moral independence."

Church Family Night

• During recent years, a number of churches have instituted family gatherings which begin with a meal and are followed by some sort of a program. These occasions are known by various names, such as "Family Night," "Church Family Night," "Fellowship Night," "Community Service," etc.

Obviously these programs are serving a real need, but in order to determine more accurately what the values are the Bible College of Missouri is making a study of the Church Family Night. If your church has such a gathering, the college would be glad to have information about it. A questionnaire may be procured from Dr. Mark Rich, Bible College of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.

Laymen Honored at Convocation

• In a special ceremony at the 1953 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, held at Saint Paul, Minnesota, October 27-29, twenty-six rural leaders of the various denominations were honored for outstanding service to their rural churches and communities. The ceremony was an inspiration to all who witnessed it.

Some of these leaders were farmers by vocation and bore the marks of long days in sun and wind. There was an editor who had several terms in state legislature, constantly battling for the "little man" in the small community. Another leader was a high-school teacher. Another, a rural mail carrier who serves not only as an agency of community communication but also of good will.

One after the other, these twenty-six rural leaders were introduced to the audience as representative outstanding laymen in their denominations and exponents of service and fellowship in their rural communities.

The thousands of rural people who "exalt Christ through Christian family life, through Christian relations in business and politics, and whose services and support keep the town and country churches functioning effectively" are the bulwark of American country life.

The 1953 Convocation

• More than 700 friends of the rural church were registered at the 1953 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, held at Saint Paul, Minnesota in October. The Department of Town and Country Church will publish the addresses and a digest of the seventeen commissions. It will be published as soon as it can be gotten through the printing process and may be procured from your denominational board for 35 cents a copy.

Send Us an Item

• TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH is a cooperative enterprise. Send us an item for publication. We want short news items as well as longer articles describing parish programs.

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DON F. PIELSTICK,
xecutive Director, Department of the Town and Country Church.

RUTH B. ROBINSON,
Editor

Advisory Committee

BENSON Y. LANDIS
ALICE MALONEY
THOMAS ALFRED TRIPP

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Penn-Alpha Larger Parish

WARREN CORBETT

• On Sunday, March 29, 1953, nineteen new members were received into the membership of the New Lebanon, Pa., Presbyterian Church. This was an eventful day for this small church of sixty-eight members because not too long ago it was on the verge of being closed by the Presbytery. It received a new lease on life when it was included in the Penn-Alpha Larger Parish.

Formation of Parish

Penn-Alpha was formed by the Presbytery of Erie, Pennsylvania, in January 1950, as the first Presbyterian larger parish in the Synod. It was the brainchild and labor of love of Davis Illingworth, then Executive and Stated Clerk of the Presbytery. Its formation followed a rural church survey which Miss Alice Maloney, Associate Secretary of the Board of National Missions' Department of Town and Country Church, made for the Synod. Those who helped with the planning were Claude Conley, Executive of the Synod of Pennsylvania, and Henry S. Randolph, Secretary of the Department of Town and Country Church of the Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

An unsuccessful attempt was made to include the United Presbyterian churches of the Parish community. The churches that were finally included were Hadley and those that had been yoked previously—the New Lebanon Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian churches of Sandy Lake and Fairfield. In April, 1953 a fifth church, Utica, was added.

Basic Work

The Parish Council began to function in May of 1950. The early meetings were not always smooth because the churches were not centrally located. Furthermore, they were fearful of losing their identities or of not getting their just share. This feeling has now been replaced by one of real effort and cooperation.

Until September, 1953 the Parish staff had included students from the nearby, Presbyterian-related, Grove City College. These students did yeomen's work in laying the foundation.

For several months a retired missionary served as interim pastor, but the author of this article has directed the work of the Parish since June, 1951. In June, 1953, Leroy Dobson, a senior at Western Theological Seminary, became resident student pastor at Hadley.

The Parish Council

The Parish Council and people worked together in creating a constitution. The Council, which meets quarterly, is composed of two representatives and two alternates from each church, one of each being a member of the Session. The Council's work is done through a program planning committee, a stewardship committee, and a youth council. The Moderator of the Council must be an ordained member of the staff. A volunteer children's worker and a volunteer secretary help to augment the efforts of the staff. Each staff member conducts services at 10:00 A.M. and 11:15 A.M., and a third person conducts a service at 11:15 in the fifth church.

Each church has its own women's and youth groups, and at one time ten choirs were operating in the Parish. Seventy per cent of the current income in the churches comes to the Parish treasury and meets all the expenses except local church upkeep and benevolences, which are cared for by each local church.

Mr. R. S. Feather, Clerk of the Hadley Session, remembers the early fears of the members of the congregations that the local churches would be swallowed up. "The churches *have* worked together," he says, "yet the Parish has been decentralized so that no church has lost any of its prerogatives."

Parish Program

The large number of members received at New Lebanon in March was the direct result of a newly initiated Parish program for pastoral

U.S.D.A. Photograph by Lee

care, in which the pastoral staff is on call twenty-four hours a day for guidance, instruction and comfort, and once a year a call is made in each home by appointment. When the pastor calls the family is gathered, knowing that he has come to discuss their church and their own spiritual welfare.

There has been some discussion of building the entire church program, apart from worship and church school, around this idea instead of centering it in organizations. A three-man staff calling in each home by appointment three times a year could deal with catechetical instruction, the program of the church, and personal Christian living and action in outreach.

The people of the Parish now know more about the church and its program than they did before the Parish was formed. A church Officers' Training Institute of five sessions was one effort in this direction. With the help of charts, printed material, visual and audio aids and lectures, the officers received an outline of local church organization, its purposes, and responsibilities. They were introduced to the zone plan of evangelism. They learned of planned education and the Every Member Canvass. They studied the Church's pronouncements on social education and action. They used a standard to evaluate their church schools. They utilized workshop techniques to decide what they would do next and what their goals would be. They examined the statistics of attendance, population and giving in their churches and communities. They discovered how the men and women and youth groups were organized and meant to function. They examined the resource materials of our church's agencies.

Attendance and Giving

One of the great challenges facing the Parish now is the large group of unreached men in the community. The Parish has 543 members and forty-one per cent of them are men. Yet, fifty-one per cent of the total population is male. We still have a job to do!

Attendance and giving have both shown real gains since the early days of the Parish. Some of the congregations used to have an attendance of from six to fifteen. During the first six months of 1953 three of our churches had more than fifty per cent of their resident members attending. To this should be added the nonmembers who come. Two years ago the churches gave to the Parish approximately $4,500. In 1952, they gave about $6,350; and in 1953 the amount was about $8,225. Churches which never contributed to General Assembly benevolences before are doing so now. In two years one church has more than doubled its benevolence giving.

Changes in Lives

Every attempt has been made to base the Parish program on a firm educational foundation. One of the churches has tried the unique experiment of teacher visitation to any person who is absent from Sunday school and requests the service, with the idea that those who can't be there need the message as much or more than those who are present.

The really rewarding experiences have been the changes accomplished in the lives of individuals. There was an untrained young woman who became a skilled teacher; a young church school superintendent and elder who was taught to pray in public; an indifferent church member who, through training and personal interest, became an officer and leader. There is an increasing number who take tithing seriously. And there is the church member who never attended but who now attends regularly and of whom one man said: "You can just see the change; he is friendlier now and smiles and waves."

Cooperation

We have a true Larger Parish: a Larger Parish Council, a written constitution, and a multiple diversified ministry. We have unified activities such as youth-week observances, a Sunday bulletin, Harvest Festival and Rural Life Sunday services, a music festival, Pentecost and Reformation services, an all-parish women's society and officers' training school, a common order of Sunday worship, joint vacation school planning, a larger parish treasury and budget; duplicating services; and joint ownership of audio-visual equipment and a filmstrip library.

These people change slowly, but they are wonderful folks—"the salt of the earth." Cooperation is the only real hope of the small church. Betty Martin, the only clerk the Council has had, claims that the Parish has given the churches all of the advantages of the best city churches while they retain the friendliness of town and country churches.

Words just can't explain all that we feel about the Larger Parish plan —its power and possibilities. One has to see to believe.

Are You Moving?

• Please send your new address to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. It takes about three weeks to make the necessary adjustments, and we don't want you to miss a copy.

More Power to Our Rural Churches

CLIFFORD C. SAUNDERS

Two hundred and fifty per cent increase in membership in thirteen years! That's good in any church. Two hundred and fifty per cent increase in church membership while the community population increases only five per cent! That's outstanding! But that is the record of the First Presbyterian Church at Fairfield, Washington.

Small Community

Fairfield is just a small country town, with a population of less than 600, in southeastern Spokane County —only eight miles from the Idaho line. It is an old town with a static population. In fact, as the farms increase in size, the population diminishes.

In 1940, the church had been without a minister for a year. Some of the faithful were trying desperately to keep a Sunday school going. That was the year that the author of this article was led to leave a church of 375 members to undertake a ministry in this rural church having a membership of 67.

There has been nothing phenomenal in the work and growth of this church during these years—no "revivals"; no "evangelistic campaigns"; no "drive for members"—just hard, steady work for the Master and for the people of the community.

Improvements

With the arrival of the new minister, interest in the church and its program increased. It wasn't long until the three rooms of the church building were bulging at the Sunday school hour. With little expense and donated labor, the sanctuary was rearranged to make the place look and feel more worshipful.

Then a portion of the floor in the church kitchen gave way. The Sunday school needed more room, and the dining space was woefully inadequate. "Why not do it right and put in a basement?" our officers asked. The project began in May 1944 with strictly volunteer labor. One farmer donated the use of his tractor; another gave the use of a "tumble-bug"; many donated labor—and it took a lot of it. It was not until November of that year that the last of the cement was poured.

Before Christmas the first dinner in the new basement was served by the ladies of the church. The room was filled to capacity—and that meant nearly four times as many people as the former dining facilities could accommodate. It was announced at the dinner that all of the improvements were "paid for in full"—a great announcement.

Growth

Still the church grew. Sunday school classes increased in number and size. With better facilities, teachers were doing a better job. When attendance at the Sunday school climbed over the one hundred mark, even the enlarged facilities were inadequate.

This time the officers decided that a fourteen-foot ceiling could be lowered and classrooms made upstairs. It was done, with volunteer labor and a $500 savings account. This added four fine large classrooms. After some experimenting, this was turned over to the new Junior Department of the Sunday school. Now the church has separate departments for the beginners (on the street level), the primaries, the juniors, and

(*continued on page* 8)

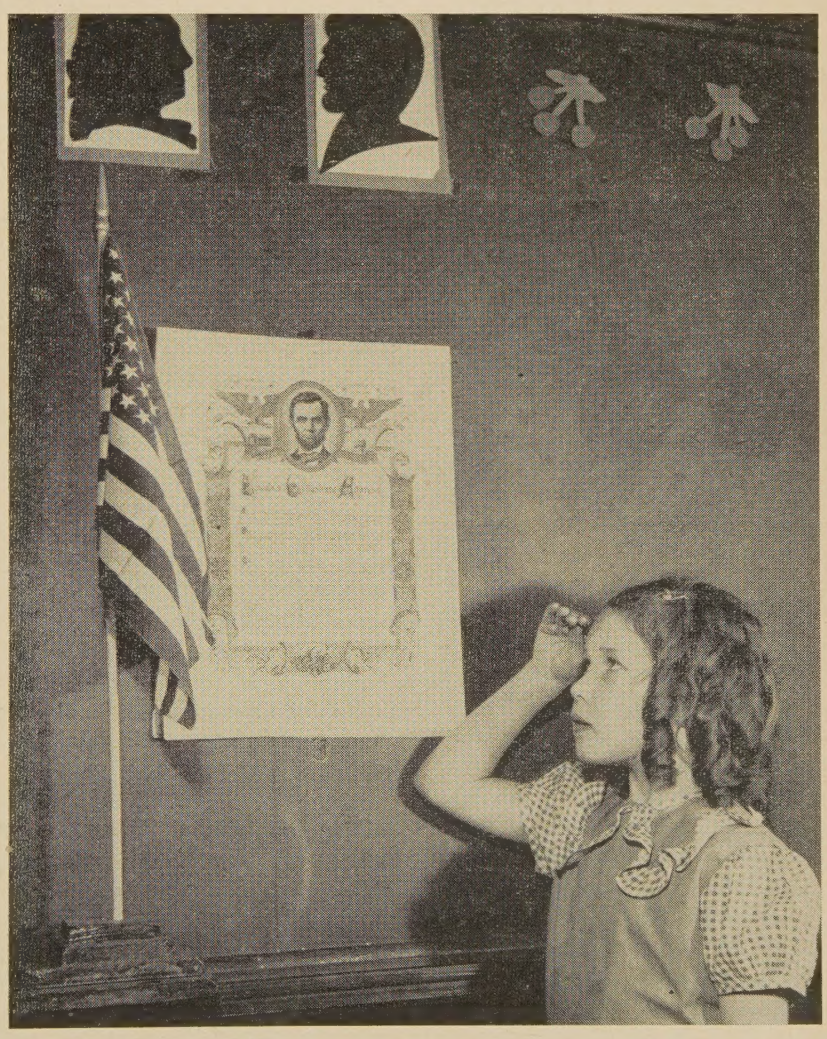

Photo by Eva Luoma

the senior-adult groups. Each class that wants a separate classroom has it.

The church membership? Like the Sunday school and the youth work, it just grew and grew. People who had lived in the community for many years saw that the church was alive and doing good things. It had even invited them to have a part in improving the facilities—something more than just a contribution. In a real sense "the church" became "our church." The membership just grew naturally. Of course newcomers were drawn into the church, the great growth came from those who had been in the community for years and suddenly became aware that the church was alive.

Program

Our church is not just a social organization. Its program, influence and teachings are strongly reflected in the moral character and behavior of the people in the community. Most of the leaders in the community are affiliated with the church. The youth leaders in the school are those in the choir and youth fellowship of the church. The influence of the church is strongly reflected in student conduct at athletic contests and all school functions. The whole community reflects the teachings of the Master. It is an outstanding example of the strength and influence of a rural church.

Recently the youth group received the "banner" for attendance at a Presbytery-wide youth rally. A young man from this small rural church was selected as the Moderator of the Youth Presbytery; another young man was chosen to lead one of the Program Areas for the Youth Presbytery. The church now has a junior choir, as well as a junior high-senior choir. It has an active club ministering to the married couples of the community. Two projects of this latter group are the granting of a $100 scholarship to a worthy and needy member of each year's senior class, to make it possible for him to go to college, and the preparation of a float for the annual Flag Day parade. They don't always take the first prize for their float, but it takes a winner to beat them. At least it is a testimony to all that Christian teachings and the church are to be considered—even in a small-town parade.

So the influence of one small rural church goes out—even beyond the bounds of its parish. More power to our rural churches!

Rural Church Advancement

• A few general comparisons of the rural church and community situation today and that of some twenty years ago have impressed me. While gains have not always been as great as could be desired, the following notes will show the indication of real progress:

THEN we were in the dark depths of the depression; NOW we have prosperity.

THEN rural folk were greatly discouraged over their churches; NOW a new hope gives most of them a great lift.

THEN few ministers were dedicated to rural careers; NOW there are many hundreds scattered across the land.

THEN rural church books were almost unheard of; NOW there is a new book almost every year.

THEN there were no bulletins beyond an occasional experiment station survey publication; NOW there are scores of bulletins.

THEN the Christian Rural Fellowship was just being organized; NOW it has several thousand members in this and other lands.

THEN only a half dozen seminaries were offering rural work; NOW approximately one half of all American seminaries give from one to nine courses.

THEN rural departments were in but a few Boards of National Missions; NOW they are in most of the major denominational boards.

THEN Town and Country Church Convocations were not being held; NOW ten annual national Convocations have been held with large attendances.

THEN organized farmers' groups gave little attention to spiritual and moral needs in rural life; NOW such topics are much more frequently on their programs and ministers conduct periods of meditation.

THEN many church buildings were dingy and in disrepair; NOW most have been modernized, remodeled, redecorated.

—RALPH L. WILLIAMSON

Allegany Wipes the Slate Clean

BERNHARD A. ROTH

• Allegany County, N. Y., became one of the nation's few debt-free, equipment-owning soil conservation districts recently, when Director Lester D. Rees deposited a final $1,400 check in the county's treasury at Belmont. The payment wiped the slate entirely clean of a $23,400 advance received early in the district's thirteen-year career.

Conservation Job

From it has grown a quarter-million dollars worth of equipment serving 1,750 farmers. It includes forty pieces of heavy, earth-moving machinery—trucks, tractors, bulldozers, carryalls, graders, terracers and the like, plus a host of specialty devices. Housed and maintained in the district sheds, the material fits the district to tackle any conservation job. And it's a comforting reserve for whatever public emergency may arise, be it fire, flood, storm or civil defense.

Effective use of facilities has earned Allegany an enviable record in the annals of the national district movement. Sample accomplishments, to date: over 400 farm ponds built; 13,000 acres reforested; 30,000 acres of woodland improved and protected; 252 miles of diversion ditching; 40 miles of streambank controlled; 60 miles of outlets and farm watercourses established.

The ultimate in skilled machinery management and precise planning was demonstrated by Allegany SCS technicians the summer they qualified for the exclusive "pond-a-day club," a construction pace seldom equaled. There are plenty of maintenance headaches in the district shops, but rust is seldom one of them.

—Reprinted from
Soil Conservation

John Burroughs' Poetry

BENSON Y. LANDIS

John Burroughs (1837-1921), the naturalist and essayist, was more modest in his attitude toward his own poetry than toward his other writings. In his preface to the collection of poems, *Bird and Bough,* he says perhaps too much attention to a New York reviewer who thought that the American public would forgive Mr. Burroughs everything but his poetry.

But John Burroughs had had a few letters from friends, asking him to publish his verses in a volume. So the writer presumed that there were those who would even forgive him his poetry, and he let their suggestions outweigh the judgment of one hard-hearted critic.

Bird and Bough

He dedicated this volume of verse: "To the kinglet that sang in my evergreens in October and made me think it was May." He wrote in his preface: "I have a fairly well-formed conviction that probably my verses contain more truth than poetry. . . . If I have achieved only good rhymed natural history I shall deem it quite worth while. . . .

"The one thing that I claim for my verses is that they keep a little closer to our wild nature—to the birds, the flowers, the seasons—than most of our minor poetry has done. I do not believe the reader will find a hint of any flora or fauna but our own in my pages. . . .

"Then if I have also succeeded in bringing home the bough with the bird singing upon it, or some suggestion of its place in the fields and woods and in the season, my title (*Bird and Bough*) will need no explanation."

This reminds one of J. F. Millet's wish, on competing his great painting, *The Angelus,* of the people in prayer in the field, with the little country church in the background, that those who viewed the painting would also hear the bells.

John Burroughs was born the son of a conservative Baptist farmer near Roxbury, N. Y., in the Catskills. He became a journalist, bank examiner, and Treasury clerk. In the year 1874 he settled on a farm near Esopus, N. Y., from which soon came a stream of writing that made John Burroughs probably both our most popular and most loved naturalist. The great concern of the father was that John in all his intellectual wanderings might actually become a Methodist preacher—which was, like most fears, unfounded.

John Burroughs wrote one of the notable studies of Walt Whitman, as early as 1867, and was one of the first to acclaim the genius of the gray poet of democracy. He possessed great powers of observation, and of transmitting his observations with clarity through his words. He became the friend of John Muir, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Theodore Roosevelt.

Burroughs' Travels

A few of the poems in the volume of verse were written on a long trek to Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. There he wrote in 1879 to the Oregon robin, the golden-crowned sparrow, and the Lapland longspur. This last, the northland bobolink, reminded him of the boyhood's bobolink:

> But no bobolink of mine
> Ever sang o'er mead so fine . . .
> Something takes me in thy note
> Quivering wing and bubbling throat;
> Something moves me in thy ways—
> Bird, rejoicing in thy days. . . .

On observing the golden-crowned sparrow:

> I bask me now on emerald heights
> To catch thy faintest strain;
> But cannot tell if in thy lay
> Be more of joy or pain.

As for the Oregon robin, which he had earlier seen in an apple bough, mid orchard's bloom:

> Thou burst now through fragrant shades
> Where hoary spruces grow;
> Where floor of moss enfolds the foot,
> Like depths of fallen snow.
> I follow fast, or pause alert,
> To spy out thy retreat;
> Or see thee perched on tree or shrub,
> Where field and forest meet.
> Thy voice is like a hermit's reed
> That solitude beguiles;
> Again 'tis like a silver bell
> Atune in forest aisles.

"The Heart of the Woods"

John Burroughs sang once of "The Heart of the Woods," recording its pulses and feelings in words, only part of which are given here, as of the poems above:

> I hear it beat in morning still
> When April skies have lost their gloom,
> And through the woods there runs a thrill
> That wakes arbutus into bloom. . . .
> The startled birches shake their curls,
> A withered leaf leaps in the breeze;
> Some hidden martin speaks, and hurls
> Its feathered missile through the trees. . . .
> Compact of life, of fervent wing,
> A dynamo of feathered power,
> Thy drum is music in the spring
> Thy flight is music every hour.

From "Snow Birds":

> The unmown fields are their preserves,
> Where weeds and grass are seeding;
> They know the lure of distant stacks
> Where houseless herds are feeding.

A poem, "The Crow," was longer than most of the productions. It closed with these lines:

> May I never cease to meet thee,
> May I never have to eat thee.
> And mayest thou never have to fare so
> That thou playest the part of scarecrow.

After communion with "The Downy Woodpecker," a poem of five stanzas is thus concluded:

> We are neighbors well agreed
> Of a common lot;
> Peace and love our only creed
> In this charmed spot.

The peace of autumn filled the soul, according to a stanza in the poem, "October":

> Once more the tranquil days brood o'er the hills,
> And soothe earth's toiling breast;
> A benediction all the landscape fills
> That breathes of peace and rest.

These brief quotations give only a taste of what may be found in thirty-four poems. And at least one who has gone through them again wonders why anyone would call them "minor." They reveal both the fire and the form of a good poet who feels an obligation to be clear, and who wishes to communicate his observations and thoughts. In the per-

(*continued on page* 10)

spective of history, we now see them as great thoughts.

Leaf and Tendril

John Burroughs went to horticulture for his illustrations of the standards he set before himself as a writer: "The great art of grape-growing is severe trimming and high culture, and I suspect the art of literature is about the same. In the vineyard it is not foliage and wood that we are after, but grapes, and in literature verbiage and superfluities are to be kept down for the same reason—we want fruit. . . . This is the gospel of the vine-dresser, and I would I could always make it mine when I write my essays." This he wrote in 1908 at the end of his preface to the book of essays, *Leaf and Tendril* (Houghton-Mifflin Company). The poems from which I quoted above are from Burroughs' Complete Works, Vol. XI, published, 1921, by Houghton-Mifflin Company.

"In Fertile Soil"

• "In Fertile Soil," a new motion picture produced by the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church, realistically tells of the challenges, appeal, and problems of rural church work. It clearly shows how the constantly changing conditions of rural life demand an unceasing emphasis and interest in town and country work, for, just as the nation's farms are the backbone of America, so the strength of the Church has its roots in the rural area.

The story of the film is told with rare skill and unusual sensitivity and has an appeal to all age levels.

The film is especially appropriate because it shows both the sound training that must lie back of an effective ministry, and the desperate need for more clergy to fill the many empty rural churches.

A 16 mm Kodachrome sound film which runs twenty-eight minutes, "In Fertile Soil" may be rented for $8 a showing or purchased for $200. It may be procured from the Audio-Visual Division, Protestant Episcopal Church, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

"A Thousand Acres of Destiny"

• Cooperation between the Fresh Air Fund of New York and the Dutchess County, N. Y., Soil Conservation District has resulted in a land use development on "a thousand acres of destiny," the words used to sum up the significance of the project by Frederick H. Lewis, executive director of the Fund. *Soil Conservation,* U.S. Department of Agriculture, November, 1953, features an account of the program.

On this large tract, the Sharpe Reservation near East Fishkill, N. Y., there will be "an example of using land within its capabilities and treating it according to its needs—a place where modern conservation farming methods are practiced," said Dr. Robert M. Salter, Chief of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service when a 25-acre lake in the center of the land was completed and there was a public meeting to dedicate the project.

There will be nine acres in a "contour orchard," 49 acres of hay and pasture land, 66 acres for recreation and wildlife development, 52 acres under "strip cropping" and the remainder in woodland carefully managed.

To this place will come disadvantaged children from the city of New York, in a camp made up of small groups, no more than ten campers together, where two aims will be emphasized: To provide conditions where children have an opportunity to be treated as individuals, and to expose these urban children "to the wonders of the natural world."

The lake was built under supervision of government employes but was paid for by voluntary contributions of individuals.

The Fresh Air Fund, in 76 years of operation, has provided country vacations for 786,648 children. *The New York Herald Tribune* aided in the steps of establishing the Fund, and still assists it although the Fund is separately incorporated. The Fund was begun by Rev. Willard Parsons, country minister, Presbyterian U.S.A., in Sherman, Pa., who early in 1877 preached a sermon to his rural congregation, and then persuaded his parishioners to become hosts to children from the crowded streets of New York. His achievement was described in TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, April, 1952.

—Information Service

In-Service Training at Green Lake, Wisconsin

• An interdenominational school for town and country ministers will be held at the Rural Church Center, Green Lake, Wis., April 22-May 6, 1954. Sponsored jointly by The American Baptist Home Mission Society, the Division of Home Missions of the National Council of Churches, and the Wisconsin Council of Churches this is the fourth year that an interdenominational school such as this has been held at Green Lake.

The courses have been planned to acquaint students with the rural church movement, improved programs including rural evangelism, administration, preaching and related subjects, church organization, the use of the Bible in teaching and preaching in the rural community, introduction to worship materials, Christian education, a treatment of other aspects of the minister's work, and a study of vital rural economic and social movements.

Ministers and their wives from town and country churches, and laymen and their wives who are interested in the rural church movement, are invited to attend this year's school.

Procedure for Enrollment

Write to your denomination's executive in charge of Town and Country Church Work in your area, or to the Executive Vice-President of the Wisconsin Council of Churches in Madison, Wisconsin, expressing your interest in attending the school. Ask for a registration blank, and information as to what scholarship aid will be given by your denomination.

Then register for the school, sending your registration blank to the Wisconsin Council of Churches, with the registration fee of $2.00 attached. There is no fee for a minister's wife who accompanies her husband. The registration fee is not refundable, nor does it apply on room and board expense.

Near to the Heart of God

HENRY S. RANDOLPH

• "This morning I came to the Lord's Table remembering. I came remembering the first Lord's Supper. I came remembering my first communion when I joined the Church, and the one when I was ordained a Presbyterian minister. I came remembering Jeff Morris, our last moonshiner, who is one of the elders of this church and will help serve communion today. I could have gone out into the garden for fresh flowers to intertwine with these sour wood branches, but instead I used wilted flowers kept over from the fair last Friday because this morning I came to the Lord's table remembering the broken lives of our community that have been made whole by our Savior."

These were the words of the Rev. Samuel Van der Meer, pastor of the Forest Hill Presbyterian Church, Morris Fork, Kentucky, as he stood in the lovely log church which he and his people had built and beautified with native shrubbery. This is a unique country church, nestled in a narrow and almost inaccessible valley of Breathitt County, once known as Bloody Breathitt. The program of the church is as unique as its building.

Community Fair

Take for example the annual Community Fair. Sam and his wife, Nola, created the fair. When it started, several years ago, the minister and his wife were the only exhibitors. The fair is now held in the large community school house, adjacent to the church.

The number and quality of the exhibits this year were almost unbelievable to an "outlander." The fruits and vegetables canned in glass looked like mighty good eating. The garden "sass" truck would surprise anyone who knew about the severe drought during the growing season. One class in needlecraft was "patching." The weaving and knitting exhibits indicated superior art in preserving the old patterns of the Southern Highlands. The pastry swelled the tastebuds. The "Family Exhibits" were attractive booths set up to display the work of the various members of a family—flowers, vegetables, farm crops, meat, preserves.

This fair brought together many distinguished people from county, state, and even out of state, including agriculture, home demonstration, and soil conservation people. Some of these visitors served as judges of the exhibits and spent two or more days at the fair.

Creative Activities

Standing with Sam in front of a "Family Exhibit" booth, all bedecked with blue ribbons, I said to him, "This is a lot of work for a minister to be promoting! Why do you do it?" He replied, as he picked up a big purple-top turnip, with a blue ribbon on it, and a bunch of bittersweet, covered with brilliant colored berries, "When we came here, we found the people poorly nourished. Their food lacked variety, vitamins and proper minerals for normal physical development. Their clothing was not very good, either in quality or design. Their homes were poor and frequently unattractive—no flowers and no shrubbery. There was no cultivation of the lovely crafts of the Southern Highlands.

"We thought that our people could and would improve along all these lines if they were shown how. We also believed that the best way to achieve this was to let them teach each other, through creative activities. The fair was developed for this purpose. It has far exceeded our highest expectations. The rural experts come to our fair to tell our people how they may win more blue ribbons, so next year we have more and better exhibits, and with it we have better fed, better clothed and more attractively housed and happier people in our community. In other words, the whole life of our community is better."

Their Sights Were Raised

At this point, a lad called: "Uncle Sam" (the affectionate name the people have for their pastor), "Come see the 'sack race.'"

The judges had completed their work. The ribbons were all attached. From miles around, in wagon and on horseback, and in auto for the venturesome folk who dared to drive their autos that last mile of rough, rocky, creek bed road, the people had come to the fair.

They had brought their baskets prepared to spend the day. Now they looked at the exhibits, they played games, but at a stated time in the morning, all activities stopped and all the people crowded into the log church. There was a worship service, a spiritual message in the context of the community fair by the minister. A professor from the college of agriculture spoke. He told the people how to grow more and better fruit, and it was little wonder that he quoted from the Bible, for no one there could fail to sense the spirit at Morris Fork that "man shall not live by bread alone."

Friday night, following the fair, there was a party for the young people at the school house. "Uncle Sam" directed the games. Everyone had a hilarious time till about ten o'clock. Then some favorite old hymns were sung with reverence and enthusiasm. There were a few words of encouragement and inspiration, and a short prayer from the pastor to lift our eyes up to the hills and our hearts up to God. Hands were joined in a fellowship circle as all joined in the Lord's Prayer.

A Christian Community

Here is a church at the center of the total life of the people, built out of raw and rough human stuff. They have built well, the pastor and the people working together with their hands, hearts and minds. When they built their church and community house of native materials, they put into them something of their own lives. So, they have a Christian community filled with neighborliness and mutual aid, binding heart to heart and all to God.

(*continued on page* 12)

The sun is setting beyond the mountain. We are sitting "at the edge of dusk," with all heads bowed, as we hear the mellow tones of the daily "prayer bell" from the church steeple sounding throughout the valley. The bell is singing out an old hymn to the redeemed community of Morris Fork:

"There is a place of quiet rest
Near to the heart of God;
A place where sin connot molest,
Near to the heart of God.
Oh Jesus, blest Redeemer
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us who wait before thee
Near to the heart of God."

"America, the Beautiful"

E. R. BOWEN

• "You have come to the Smokies at their most beautiful time of the year," was the greeting of the Government naturalist to a large group of vacationers assembled to hear his illustrated lecture on "The Animals, Trees and Flowers of the Smokies" in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, in October 1953.

As for us who were members of the audience, he surely expressed our feelings. For that afternoon we had driven in the Smokies on roads where both sides were a continuous panorama of the most beautiful red maples, yellow birches, brown oaks and other trees.

Physical Beauty

While the principal evidence that America is physically beautiful was the changing colors of the leaves of the trees, yet we saw physical beauty around us everywhere: in the stubble where grain and soybean crops had been harvested, in the corn fields where the crops had been half harvested, in the black and red plowed fields, in the green winter wheat fields, in the sumac and other shrubs, in the bitter-sweet which we garnered for a year-round bouquet of beauty, and even in the varied shades of orange and brown of the innumerable kinds of weeds as they prepared for winter's coming.

Cultural Beauty

But there is another facet to "America: the Beautiful" that impressed our hearts and minds on such a trip, which might be expressed by the words "Cultural Beauty."

In no other areas of America has the beauty of home handicrafts and of folk singing and dancing been so well developed and preserved as in the mountain areas of the Southeast.

We began to see this type of Cultural Beauty when we stopped over night at Berea, Kentucky. There we explored the activities carried on by the students of Berea College, a self-help institution which draws its student body from the mountain areas.

We stayed at the Boone Tavern where the students have built all the furniture and woven all the rugs, curtains and bedding in the rooms, where they act as waitresses, kitchen help, bell hops, etc., in payment for part of their expenses, and where courtesy abounds in their every act, with signs strictly warning against any subservient tipping.

We visited the seemingly innumerable self-help activities carried on by the students: laundry, dairy, candy kitchen, forestry, farming, furniture and pottery making, weaving, etc., and imagined the day when college students everywhere will contribute to their expenses by such activities.

Then we went on to the fountain heads of organized cultural activities at Gatlinburg and Asheville. Here we not only saw the displays of handicrafts of every kind but also the articles being made. Each time we take the trip we resolve to try to train our own hands to create something of beauty and utility ourselves. While we do not fail to realize and appreciate the release from drudgery that we have gained from mechanical devices in our home, we realize that there is a creative pleasure to be found in do-it-yourself activities, which we have largely missed.

Social Beauty

I have been told that there have been Americans who have come home from Great Britain and other European countries without having recognized that they have been among cooperative institutions. It might be possible to take a trip such as I have described without realizing the tremendous development of non-profit cooperative and public enterprises of various kinds in these United States, although it would be difficult to do so. I choose to describe them by the name of "Social Beauty."

Albert Schweitzer is Recipient of Nobel Prize

• Dr. Albert Schweitzer, famous medical missionary, philosopher and musician, will welcome the Nobel Peace prize as a means to intensify his efforts on behalf of mankind in French Equatorial Africa where he runs a hospital at Lambarene. The prize amounts to about $33,200.

Dr. Schweitzer was born in 1875, in the Alsatian village of Kayserberg. He was the son of an Evangelical pastor.

During the years since he first went to Africa, Dr. Schweitzer has written two biographies of Bach, a treatise on the art of organ building, several books on Africa, two long studies of Jesus and one of St. Paul, an examination of Indian thought, a study of Goethe, an autobiography, and the first two volumes of a projected three-volume "Philosophy of Civilization."

—Religious News Service

Church Publicity

• The Presbyterian and Lutheran churches of Markville, Minnesota find a postal card an "inexpensive but effective means of publicity," writes the Rev. A. E. McLean, pastor of the Presbyterian Church. They use a postal-card-size duplicating machine and one card, bearing the announcements of both churches, is sent to everyone in the community. The cards are paid for by voluntary contributions.

"And A Highway Shall Be There"*

ROBERT F. THOMAS

• The prophecy is being fulfilled at Pittman Community Center in the Great Smoky Mountains. When we came here twenty-seven years ago, roads were non-existent. It seems difficult to imagine the difficulties which we had in transportation. It actually took hours to travel from Pittman Center to the nearest good road, thirteen miles away. And to add to the difficulty there were no bridges—one had to ford the river and the creeks.

Now, a good state highway is rapidly being built which will go through the mountains a short distance from Pittman Center. This will make it possible to reach the tourist city of Gatlinburg in a few minutes.

Some people wonder if these improvements have affected the mountain people, with their distinctive speech and pioneer ways. It is true that they have been exploited and nowadays one has to go on a rough back road to find a genuine old-fashioned log cabin. Most of them look, talk and live like other Americans.

Visitors

Pittman Community Center has many visitors who come to see what we are trying to do here. We have had people from all parts of the United States and even from other parts of the world. One of the most recent visitors was the Governor of the Northern District of Lebanon. Then there was a doctor from Korea and some people from India.

Center Improvements

The farm has been improved. The alfalfa fields have provided hay, and we have had plenty of corn in the crib for the animals. We are proud of the fact that over a period of years we have planted over half a million trees. Ours was one of the first "tree farms" in Tennessee. We wish you could see the gardens which provide vegetables for a long season.

Repairs and improvements have been made on the buidings, too, and they look very attractive in their fresh coats of white paint. As a gift from Plymouth Church in Buffalo, N. Y., the living room of the Home Economics building has been refinished and refurnished—first, with an oak floor in random widths from our own forest; then, new locally made furniture and hand-woven draperies and upholstering material were added.

Missionary Enterprise

The General Store continues to render service, and many useful articles of clothing are sold at small prices at the Good Will Store. The cooperative society has had some ups and downs but it is now in good condition. The weavers were well rewarded—when the surplus was divided, some of them received over $300. These rewards were based on the number of hand-woven articles sold through the cooperative.

We are especially glad to mention these phases of our missionary enterprise because, even though the country as a whole has been having "boom" times many mountain people have found it difficult to supply themselves with necessities. Our Christmas Basket Program amounted to hundreds of dollars' worth of staple groceries, which we distributed among those in need. Besides this, we continue to give direct relief

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Photo by Eva Luoma

* From an annual report to the Board of Home Missions of the Methodist Church.

where it is needed. We call our cows "Missionary Cows" because so much of their milk has been given to those who need it and cannot buy it.

Our Needs

Through the years we have been proud of the members of our staff and the fine spirit they have shown, but we still have needs. Just now we want a nurse or a nurse-technician. In the farm and forest we need a farm-manager. In the school we need a teacher of vocational agriculture and another for manual training.

But our greatest need is spiritual. We need the spiritual resources that will enable us to accomplish the tasks which are basic with Pittman Community Center. Mountains to be removed, valleys to be filled, so that "a highway shall be there, and a way."

Oberlin Museum

• It often happens that important relics are lost or destroyed before suitable arrangements are made for systematic collecting and housing. Rural churchmen visiting Europe last summer were shocked to find that this was the case with the possessions of John Frederick Oberlin. Many of the educational devices he used, his personal effects, and his writings have not been collected, and those that have been assembled are inadequately displayed. Our rural churchmen learned, however, that a local committee had been organized to found an Oberlin Museum, and that this committee needs funds to purchase and house the significant relics.

The Department of Town and Country Church was authorized, at its fall meeting, to accept funds for this purpose and to transfer them to the Waldersbach Committee for the establishment of an Oberlin Museum.

If you would like to have a part in this historic project, make your contribution payable to OBERLIN MUSEUM, and mail it to the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Prayer

(From a Service of Praise at the 1953 Convocation)

• O God, our Father, we thank thee for all who serve rural people and their communities. We praise thee for rural saints who nurture goodness and for poets whose songs inspire us.

We remember with gratitude all who serve in humble ways. May the practice of the simple and homely arts be a noble service of good will.

Direct those who teach classes, the leaders of youth and those who plan for good causes. May public officials be responsive to community needs and professional workers make their leadership a high calling. Inspire ministers to work with people as shepherds with their flocks. Save from discouragement all who envisage a better people and an improved community. Endow them with an abiding hope. Let all be sustained by the assurance that good deeds like good seeds may be slow in germinating. Let all live and serve in the faith that thy kingdom beginning now can come in the community and in the hearts of people. *Amen.*

—MARK RICH

Land and People

• We must give people Truth, which is something more than an assemblage of facts.

We must develop in them a philosophy, if conservation is to be a true mass movement. . . .

We must give them leadership that will develop volunteer leaders at local levels.

We must set up an ethical standard within the body of society that will form a new measurement for social approval.

We must realize that conservation cannot disassociate itself from any of the other social forces moving man in his daily routine.

We must remember that we can do relatively little about managing wildlife unless we can do a great deal about managing man's manipuation of the earth on which all life exists.

—DAN SAULTZ

Reprinted from *Soil Conservation*

BOOK REVIEWS

Psychology of Pastoral Care. By Paul E. Johnson. Abingdon Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn. 1953. $4.75.

Dr. Johnson's new book is one of the most comprehensive yet published in the field of pastoral care. From his wealth of experience in teaching and counseling, as well as his intimate knowledge of the past and the present literature of psychology, the author applies psychology not only to pastoral counseling but to the entire field of ministerial activity.

In the preface, he states: "The pastor who knows the true interests and potentialities of his people will meet them at the center rather than the periphery of life's meanings and work with them at the focus of vital awareness. In such awareness psychology and religion will converge in the theory and practice of pastoral care."

This, Dr. Johnson proceeds to do, and in a style that is easy to read and understand. His excellence as a teacher is reflected in his writing. The book, containing 361 pages, is divided into ten parts covering the field of pastoral work.

Titles of the Parts reflect the range of consideration: *The Person and the Pastor; Pastoral Relationships; Responsive Counseling; Confession; Marriage Counseling; The Pastor and The Family; The Ministry of Healing; Meeting Death; The Pastor Himself; Ultimate Concerns.*

Much has been and is being written in this field, but Dr. Johnson's book seems to sum up a lot of it. The reader soon senses that he is a writer who has come to grips with the phases of pastoral care that the average pastor meets from day to day. This book will be regarded in the future as a classic in this field.

The Appendix includes "Standards for the Work of the Chaplain in the General Hospital," adopted in 1950 by the American Protestant Hospital Association. This will prove to be of special interest to pastors who are interested in institutional ministry.

—CARL J. SCHERZER

Recent Thought in Focus. By Donald Nicholl. Sheed & Ward, New York. 1952. $3.50.

For those of us who like our philosophy in small doses, this book by a British university professor is a good prescription. Here in 250 pages is a critical evaluation of several of the modern philosophical schools of thought, including phenomenology, existentialism, and logical positivism. I think "evaluation" is the right term for this treatise which should not lead us to expect an unbiased condensation of the main tenets of thought in each of these philosophies.

As the title indicates there is a "focus" in this evaluation of these systems of thought, and the focus is not too complimentary to them. Having said this, we must state also that Professor Nicholl has been willing to point out certain correctives to previous philosophy which the modern sytems contribute. For instance, the existentialists emphasize the ineffable and undefinable quality of existence which is a good antidote to the extreme rationalism of a previous period. But Professor Nicholl insists that this form of existentialism is within the framework of such ancient "existentialists" as Thomas Aquinas, Augustine, and Duns Scotus, all of whom recognize the mystery of being. Even Yahweh on Mt. Sinai gave a typical existentialist answer to the question of His identity when he said "I am who am." But we must go on from here to *belief* which involves rational processes.

Most philosophical laymen will find this book rather hard going, but rewarding. Moreover, it is organized into convenient capsules which can be taken one at a time. The fact that Professor Nicholl is a Roman Catholic gives the book an added interest, and helps to explain the "focus" in the title. It is interesting to see, reenacted in modern dress, the ancient principle of the Roman Church demonstrated in Professor Nicholl's philosophical accommodation to modern philosophy. This is what St. Thomas did with Aristotle.

Mr. Nicholl explains a tendency of modern philosophy to confuse concepts with objects. Perhaps he falls into his own trap when he confuses the Ultimate with a certain canonization of the ultimate called Roman Catholicism.

At least the book is a good mental exercise, and it is possible to emerge from it with a slight exposure to the modern vogue in philosophy with which to impress one's more learned colleagues.

—Wesley Akin Hotchkiss

New Farm Horizons. By Kirk Fox. Meredith Publishing Company, Des Moines, Iowa, 1952. $3.00.

This book has many qualities that make it distinctive. In ninety pages it presents a comprehensive review of progress in American agriculture written in the clear, concise and interesting style of a master journalist. Its illustrations, format and binding are of such quality that the American Society of Graphic Arts listed it as one of the fifty most beautiful books published in 1952. Although realistic in stating problems, it presents an encouraging outlook—particularly with respect to the expanding domestic markets, technological progress and higher standards of living on the farm.

The first brief chapter refers to the increasing food needs of a growing population. Then there are three dealing with advances in agricultural science and food technology. Rural electrification, farm mechanization and "Animal Agriculture" are each lifted out for separate treatment.

Chapter 8 suggests that weather factors may be more fully brought under man's control. The work of the Farmers Home Administration receives special commendation in a discussion of "The Unemployed Farmer." Communications are shown to help farm people become informed regarding new developments in agriculture and to understand that their neighbors now include men and women on the opposite side of the globe.

There is less of optimism in Chapter 11, which deals with "Community Welfare"—the work done to obtain better schools, medical services, and spiritual guidance.

Assurances, in Chapter 12, that higher standards of living will be maintained are supported, in part, by the fact that farmers have learned the value of organized teamwork. Then there is a concluding discussion of "The Family Farm" in which the author states that "the fine training to be obtained on a family-sized farm cannot be overlooked."

New Farm Horizons is not sold in book stores, but a limited number are available from the Book Sales Department of Meredith Publications, Des Moines. Only 10,000 copies were printed. It was written as a contribution to public relations and rural-urban understanding on the Fiftieth Anniversary of *Successful Farming*, which was founded by E. T. Meredith, Sr., in 1902.

This book makes refreshing reading for anyone dealing with farm people. Farmers, themselves, will find it an excellent resource to use in setting new goals.

—W. H. Stacy

Long Wednesdays. By Earl Chapin. Abelard Press, New York, and, in Canada, Nelson, Foster and Scott. 1953. $3.00.

I have just finished reading *Long Wednesdays,* a delightful account of the experiences of a young couple who found that living in a small apartment in a large city, complete with its noise, gas fumes and hustling, was not pleasant, and undertook to keep alive a small town weekly paper. Wednesday was the publication day for *The Sentinal* but quite often it didn't reach its subscribers until Saturday—hence the title of the book.

Earl Chapin has a style of writing which manages to convey to the reader a mental picture of the situation and its people. From the moment he opens his story, with an introduction to two of the chief characters in the narrative, until he ends it in dispair over his election to the office of Mayor, he takes the reader through his experiences in a vivid and humorous manner.

In addition to being entertaining, *Long Wednesdays* is a true portrayal of small-town life. Those of us who live under the same satisfactory circumstances will fully appreciate the

people we meet in these pages. The first of these is "the Reverend," who was chiefly responsible for this projection into the publishing business. With a burning desire to lift the town of Tamarack from the throes of the great "depression" back to its former dignity, prestige and fullness of living, the Reverend Mr. Powell envisaged an ally in a sincere editor of *The Tamarack Sentinal.* He proved to be right!

The town of Tamarack on Lake Dubois and the *Sentinal,* and how the author adopted the former and struggled with the latter, are the means whereby a good story is told. One can sense the philosophy of the town's "big shot" and appreciate the manner in which folks either toadied to him or took him for granted as an institution, and sympathize with those who felt helpless in the face of his power. How the forces of good won out helps to demonstrate the inherent goodness of these small-town people. When the need arose for a common front against a fire which threatened the printing plant, the enemy of community welfare cooperated and true community was brought that much nearer.

The author apparently has that quality which sees good in most people and he manages to get good words and deeds out of them.

The *bete noir* of the piece is the monstrous printing press, called "Betsy" by those who serve her. Nothing could daunt her once she started on her noisy and productive way, but to get her started was not easy. Probably the highlight of her career was the time a curious cat tangled with her!

Whole chapters of this book are humorous enough to cause long and continuous chuckles and many spots are so funny that the reading is completely disrupted, such as his description of what the groom wore at a wedding, in great detail, while the bride received one short sentence. Despite these many items in lighter vein its underlying current is definitely philosophical and well worth reading.

—John Peacock

Afterglow. By the Rev. William T. Renison and Clara Shepherd Reid-Renison. Exposition Press, New York. 1953. $2.50.

"Emotion recollected in tranquillity" might be an appraisal of *Afterglow.* With vigor and charm the Rev. William T. Renison and Clara Shepherd Reid-Renison tell some of their favorite stories after a long career in church work. There is a mellowness about the stories which is like the patina on old furniture, smoothed and polished by long usage.

The impression should not be given, however, that these are merely good yarns. They are anecdotes about real occurrences in a ministry conducted in Arizona, California, Montana and New York—"all places which leave their mark upon a man." And Mr. Renison in each case has captured some of the flavor of the place where he was working.

The chapter, "Montana Story," tells of missionary meetings held long ago but according to a pattern in use today. Previous to the visit of the missionary the meetings were advertised by signs in the local post office. Since there was no church building, the services had to be held in the school house. The teacher's desk was transformed into an altar and the teacher was the organist. The local minister introduced the Rev. Mr. Renison with a true story —it seems that when the two clergymen came to a gate, Mr. Renison jumped out and opened the gate to let his friend drive through. To his friend's amusement, he carefully closed the gate, "fastened it securely and then proceeded to climb over it and walk leisurely up to the car."

But the book is not all tranquillity. There are accounts of other human emotions like the anger of the neighbor who lost a pedigreed rooster to the minister's bird-hunting dog, or the disappointment of the womenfolks when the visiting doctor from their former home preferred a game of chess and "the great silence" with Mr. Renison to luncheon and gossip with the news-hungry wife and daughter. These more sombre moments help to balance the lighter tales and to create the feeling that the Renisons are very real people. He mentions "dwelling in the house of laughter" which, although it may be overdone, may be a healthy thought for the clergyman's family to keep in mind to insure a balance in the total experience in the ministry. One of Mr. Renison's most charming features is his ability to laugh at himself.

One thought which was tucked in among some mildly humorous anecdotes seemed worthy of a little more serious contemplation: "I have always thought that everyone returning from the communion rail was beautiful. Young or old, well-favored or homely, for the moment they all shine with an inner radiance as if actually touched by the Divine Hand." —Helen Philbrick

Pennsylvania Rural Fellowship

• The Northeastern Pennsylvania Christian Rural Fellowship preceded its meeting on December 5th with a covered dish luncheon. The program which followed included a report of the 1953 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country with a tape recording of Dr. Ira Moomaw's address on "Hope Rises From the Land."

Retreating

• We hear a lot about "retreats" in the modern church; these retreats are whole days or weekends in which busy men get away from the monotony of business and the fast-moving, noisy world they live in, to spend a few hours in quiet meditation.

It is not a bad idea; Jesus did it occasionally! But if those retreats become just occasions to forget the world while we rest and enjoy ourselves, they are sinful. Jesus not only meditated; he meditated on what he was to do next.

Mr. J. C. Penney puts it well when he tells of a friend of his who was packing his bag for a weekend retreat. His young son couldn't quite understand it. "Retreat, Dad?" he asked. "Who is after you?"

When you pray—whom and what are you retreating from? Or whom and what are you preparing to meet?

—Frank S. Mead in
Tarbell's Teachers' Guide
(Fleming H. Revell Company)